



ParentInfo

News for a child's most important educator

May 1, 2014

Produced by the Kentucky Department of Education

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Teachers deserve our utmost thanks this year

I'm not a teacher, but I'll be the first to admit that I'm super excited about Teacher Appreciation Week.

With all the creative ways to thank teachers these days, who wouldn't be excited to show them we are grateful for all the hard work they are putting in teaching Kentucky students. As the parent of a Kentucky public school student, I am definitely that.

Teacher Appreciation Week is May 5-9, and Teacher Appreciation Day is May 6, so start planning now for a unique and fun way to say thanks.

The Kentucky Department of Education's (KDE) flagship publication, [Kentucky Teacher](#), is going all out to show teacher appreciation this year. It's celebrating throughout the month of May by running photos of Kentucky teachers on social media. Be sure to check out the KDE Facebook and Twitter pages to see all the photos taken by KDE photographer Amy Wallot.

While you're on Twitter, post your gratitude to your child's teacher or teachers using [#ThankATeacher](#). Below are some websites if you want more teacher appreciation ideas.

- [Pinterest - teacher appreciation](#)
- [PTA.org](#)
- [Edutopia](#)
- [Cozi](#)
- [National Education Association](#)
- [TeacherVision](#)

E-mail me at susan.riddell@education.ky.gov with a photo showing how you celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week. Maybe I'll use it in a future *ParentInfo*. Just make sure you identify anyone in the photo and list the school and district.

New to ParentInfo?
Click [here](#) to sign up to receive this newsletter twice a month.

If you get a chance, too, throw a thanks or shout-out to your former teachers whether it's on Facebook, through a phone call or a personal note. They'll love it. Make it a great week for all Kentucky teachers!

- Susan Riddell



KCSS offers new e-mail tipline to all Kentucky public schools

The Kentucky Center for School Safety has introduced the Safety Tipline, Online Prevention (STOP) Tipline designed to use as an online reporting and prevention tool. If students, parents or community partners know of an unsafe situation in a school, such



as bullying, weapons, drugs, etc., they can anonymously pass on that information to school personnel by using the basic e-mail format.

According to KCSS, it intent of the tipline is

not to replace face-to-face open communication and relationships built at schools. The STOP tipline is just one more tool available for use by students or parents to communicate unsafe situations at school.

The tipline is not for immediate response. If anyone needs immediate assistance, they should dial 911.

Benefits:

- availability
- comfort
- extra layer of accessibility between students and trusted school personnel

How does it work? Students or parents:

- click logo on school website
- choose whether you want to submit a tip about 1) bullying; 2) violence or 3) other risky behaviors
- extra layer of accessibility between students and trusted school personnel
- fill in the check boxes and explain
- click submit

This service is free to all Kentucky school districts, and information, resources and trainings are provided. For more information, contact [KCSS](#) at (270) 809-3235.



Beshear ceremonially signs anti-bullying bill

Surrounded by hundreds of students at Madison Middle School (Madison County), Gov. Steve Beshear recently ceremonially signed Senate Bill 20, which designates October as "Anti-Bullying Month" each year in Kentucky.

The bill also creates a purple and yellow ribbon as the symbol for anti-bullying awareness in the state – with the color purple representing domestic violence victims and yellow representing those individuals who have taken their lives as a result of bullying.

"Bullying isn't just a schoolyard issue – it can affect children, teens and adults in their homes, schools and community activities," Beshear said. "I am proud to sign this bill to bring more awareness to the damage that bullying creates in our communities, and I hope that further awareness will help us work together to end these unacceptable behaviors."

Madison Middle students have followed this legislation closely throughout the session, and some came to Frankfort to testify in support of the bill. The purple and yellow colors in the anti-bullying ribbon also are the school's colors.

"Bullying has changed so much over the years, going from a face-to-face conflict when I was a student to one that today is blasted across social media," Sen. Jared Carpenter, of Berea, said. "Being the victim of bullying can change a child's life forever. If we can raise bullying awareness to a level that makes a difference in the life of just one child, we can call this a success."

To read more about Kentucky Department of Education bullying prevention initiatives, click [here](#).

To see what students are doing in schools to prevent bullying, click [here](#).

Also, check out the Kentucky Center for School Safety website [here](#).



New eligibility requirement for preschool students

As a result of [House Bill 235](#), changes were made to the Kentucky State-Funded Preschool Program.

A new minimum age requirement for state-funded preschool students will take effect this fall, moving from Oct. 1 to Aug. 1. Beginning in school year 2014-15, children who are 4-years-old by Aug. 1 are age-eligible for the state-funded preschool program.

In addition, the income eligibility requirement will change from 150 percent of poverty in 2014-15 to 160 percent of poverty in 2015-16.

A few of the questions addressed in a drafted document of the new eligibility requirement for Kentucky State-Funded Preschool Guidance for School Districts are answered below.

How about preschool children with disabilities?

School districts are required to provide instruction to children with disabilities based on the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Kentucky special education regulations (707 KAR 1:002-1:380).

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) tells what supports, services, instruction and amount of time in a regular education classroom, must be provided to a child with disabilities. Beginning in 2014-15, preschool children with disabilities who turn 4 between Aug. 1 and Oct. 1 will be eligible for preschool as 3-year-old students.

What options are there for children turning 4 after Aug. 1?

Parents should work with districts to support families of non-eligible young children with existing strategies and resources, including referrals to child care and Head Start, tuition options for preschool if space is available, and child development materials such as the early childhood parent guides.

For additional information, contact Kentucky Department of Education early childhood consultant [Bill Buchanan](#).

SPECIAL REPORT

Setting the pace: expanding opportunity for students under RTTT

In March 2014 The White House released a report informing the public of the fourth year of the signature education reform initiative, Race to the Top, an investment in America's educational system that promoted innovation and reform and excellence.

In 2011, Kentucky was awarded \$17 million in Race to The Top funding. The money targeted K-12 reforms that already have led to improved student achievement.

Nationally, Race to the Top grantees served 22 million students and 1.5 million teachers in more than 40,000 schools.

Many state and local leaders, educators and communities have been deep in the hard work of education improvement. Over the past four years, states have taken action to develop strategies that have created more opportunities for America's students.

Race to the Top has unleashed these leaders' creativity and innovation to better support their educators, close achievement gaps and ensure all students are prepared to succeed in college and careers. Under Race to the Top, states spearheaded efforts to create plans tailored to their students' needs.

Many states also collaborated with each other in new ways to create more opportunities for students, including those who have been traditionally underserved, to achieve their fullest potential.

Under these grants, schools and districts made sure there are excellent principals leading our schools and skilled teachers who inspire students. Encouraged and supported by Race to the Top, states are taking major steps forward for our nation's students. To read the entire report, click [here](#).



Another reminder: Don't forget to thank your child's teachers next week, May 5-9, for Teacher Appreciation Week. Pictured here: 2013 National Board Certified Teachers at the Capitol with Gov. Steve Beshear.

Joe Kelly Award nominations sought

The Kentucky Board of Education is accepting nominations for the 13th annual Joseph W. Kelly Award to be given to a businessperson who has offered outstanding leadership and service toward promoting school improvement and equity of educational opportunity for all students.

Along with the nomination form, an essay (500 words or less) describing how the nominated businessperson has further enhanced the educational opportunities for children on the school, community and/or state levels must be submitted.

The deadline for receipt of nominations is May 19 (close of business). Send the [nomination form](#) and essay to the Kentucky Board of Education (Attention: Mary Ann Miller), 500 Mero St., first floor, Capital Plaza Tower, Frankfort, KY 40601 or e-mail them to [Mary Ann Miller](#).

Student writing winners announced

The Kentucky Department of Education has announced the winners in the 2014 national Letters About Literature (LAL) annual writing contest.

Sponsored by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, the contest challenges students in grades 4-10 to write a personal letter to an author, living or dead, of any book that inspired them. The letter must explain how that author's work changed the student's way of thinking about the world or themselves.

Kentucky students compete with each other in the state competition. First, second and third place winners in three grade levels receive cash awards (1st place – \$150; 2nd place – \$75; 3rd place – \$50). The first place winners at each level advance to the national judging and a chance to win a \$1,000 cash award or \$150 for second place. National winners will be announced in May.

The 2014 Letters About Literature writing contest winners are listed [here](#).

Opera outreach program available for fall shows

The University of Kentucky Schmidt Opera Outreach Program has announced that its fall touring show will be "The Adventures of Alice in Operaland" by Joe Walsh.

Inspired by the classic tale of *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice journeys through the enchanted forest meeting some of opera's most beloved characters who teach her all about what makes an opera.

Children will learn terms such as maestro and diction as well as the cultural background of opera and the many components that come together to make opera a special and unique genre. They will do this all while hearing melodies from the world's most famous operas.

This program will educate and entertain grades K-5 audiences.

Bookings are available from Sept. 15 through Nov. 27.

Call Courtney Turay at (859) 402-6946 or e-mail UKSOOP@gmail.com to book or sponsor a show.

For more information, go to <http://ukoperatheatre.org> - click on Opera Outreach.

Kentucky Department of Education

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